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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Most holy and gracious God, who turns the shadow of night into morning, satisfy us with Your mercy that we may rejoice and be glad this day. Lift the light of Your countenance upon our lawmakers. Calm every troubled thought and guide their feet into the way of peace. Lord, perfect Your strength in their weakness and help them to serve You in the spirit that honors Your Name. Guide their debates to expose truth, to produce creative compromise, and to bring solutions that will keep America strong. May they use their talents to restore and renew our Nation and world. We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM WEBB led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 2, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator

from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WEBB thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following the remarks of the two leaders, the Senate will consider the Omnibus appropriations bill. The bill will be open for debate and amendments. There will be no rollcall votes today as we announced previously. Senators should expect the next vote to occur prior to the caucus luncheons tomorrow. There will be a joint meeting of Congress on Wednesday at 11 a.m. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown will address Members of Congress in the Hall of the House of Representatives. Senators are encouraged to gather in the Senate Chamber at 10:30, those who wish to, to proceed to the House as a body so we can get there in time for the 11 o'clock session.

GOOD FAITH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as a majority, we have done a good job of showing that the Senate can act in a reasonable manner. We have had amendments. We have shown good faith by allowing amendments on basically everything. This bill that is now before us is a big bill. I know there will be speeches given about how big it is. But keep in mind what is in the bill. Last year, we couldn't work anything out with the President, so we funded everything except Defense, Homeland Security, and military construction with a con-

tinuing resolution that took us until March 6. March 6 is upon us. The reason I am talking about the bill being the size it is, remember, it includes appropriations for the year dealing with Agriculture—extremely important—Commerce, Energy, Treasury, Interior, Labor, legislative branch—I was chairman of that subcommittee for a long time, and very important items are included in that—State Department. Of course, there are lots of other things that go into those. I have just mentioned the main name on the bill that is in the omnibus.

This process has been as open as anything could be. The full committee was open. Each one of the subcommittees had full input by all ranking members. It is time we move on to get into a regular process where we have not 9 bills but 12 bills that we bring before the Senate. That is what I intend to do.

As we have shown good faith, I think the Republicans have shown good faith. Although there are some amendments I wish they had not offered, that is how things work out here. On this bill, we have to make sure that reciprocity is also the same. We have shown good faith. I have had a lot of people come to me and say: Look, this bill is so important. Let's not have any amendments. Let's go ahead and get 60 votes and get it out of here. I think that is not the right thing to do. As I have announced, there will be amendments. As much as we can, we are not going to have a bunch of amendments pending because we are working on a very short timeframe, and we will work as closely as we can with the minority. We have two terrific managers of this bill, Senators INOUE and COCHRAN.

I was told Senator MCCAIN was going to be here to offer an amendment. I was told he was going to offer an amendment and that we would have a CR and not the omnibus. That is a reasonable amendment to offer. I think that is appropriate. We will need a little time to talk about that. But I think

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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